

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendments and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-25 are pending. Claims 16-22 are withdrawn. By this amendment, Claims 1-8, 10, 11, and 16-23 are amended; Claims 24 and 25 are added; and no claims are canceled herewith. Support for the present amendments can be found in the original specification, for example, at page 14, lines 11-26, and in original Claim 3. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-15 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; Claims 1, 2, 10, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,151,008 to Ishida et al. (hereinafter "Ishida"); Claims 1-7, 10, 14, 15, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,705,177 to Okuno et al. (hereinafter "Okuno") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,485,250 to Hofmeister; and Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ishida in view of Japanese Publication No. 2000-072248 (hereinafter "JP '248").

First, it is noted that withdrawn Claims 16-22 are amended to depend on Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Claims 16-22 be included in the elected claims and examined on the merits.

With respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Claims 1, 10, and 11 are amended to correct the informalities noted in the Office Action. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph be withdrawn. However, if the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually acceptable language.

Turning now to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ishida, Okuno, Hofmeister, and JP '248, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections and traverse these rejections, as discussed below. Claim 1 is amended to include features from original Claim 3 and recites, in part, “a link mechanism coupling the proximal end arms of the first and second arm mechanisms to each other to drive and interlock the first and second arm mechanisms” and “the second driving mechanism including a single second motor common to the first and second arm mechanisms and providing a driving force for swinging the link mechanism and a second transmission part that transmits the driving force of the second motor to the driving link.” It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest each feature described in amended Claim 1.

Instead, Ishida merely discusses an apparatus including two arm mechanisms each for supporting a wafer, wherein the two arm mechanisms are not coupled to each other by a link mechanism, but instead are driven by their own driving motors (44), respectively. Ishida does not disclose or suggest “a link mechanism coupling the proximal end arms of the first and second arm mechanisms to each other to drive and interlock the first and second arm mechanisms,” and “a single second motor common to the first and second arm mechanisms and providing a driving force for swinging the link mechanism,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Okuno discusses a robot arm mechanism 200 including a robot arm 220 with two arm links 210, 211 that are driven by their own driving motors connected through their own shafts 225 and 226, respectively. The robot arm 220 further includes a link retaining mechanism 229 pivotably retaining the first 210 and second 220 arm links. However, the first and second links 210, 211 are not driven by a “single second motor common to the first and second arm mechanisms,” as recited in amended Claim 1. Instead, Okuno states that “[t]he first driving

shaft 225 is integrally connected to the first end portion of the first arm link 210 and is driven by an electric motor, not shown, to rotate the first arm link 210 around the rotation axis 298. The second driving shaft 226 is integrally connected to the first end portion of the second arm link 211 and is driven by another electric motor, not shown, to rotate the second arm link 211 around the rotation axis 298 independently of the first arm link 210” (emphasis added).

Further, it is respectfully submitted that Hofmeister and JP ‘248 do not cure the deficiencies of Okuno. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ishida, Okuno, Hofmeister, and JP ‘248 is respectfully requested.

New Claims 24 and 25 are added by the present amendment. Support for new Claims 24 and 25 can be found in the specification, for example, at page 14, lines 11-26. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added. New Claims 24 and 25 depend on Claim 1, and thus, are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that new Claims 24 and 25 be allowed.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

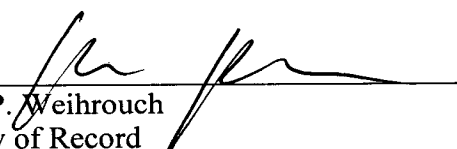
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